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TAGS: [PREL](#) [OSCE](#) [GG](#) [RU](#)
SUBJECT: GEORGIA/OSCE/RUSSIA: COMPREHENSIVE OSCE TOOLBOX TO
ENCOURAGE PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IN ABKHAZIA

REF: A. TBILISI 802 (EXDIS)
[1](#)B. MOSCOW 1298

USOSCE 00000132 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Ambassador Julie Finley for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: With the increase in tensions between Georgia and Russia over Abkhazia, we understand that Washington is developing new proposals aimed at stabilizing the situation and eventually resolve the conflict (See Ref A). In this context, we believe that the OSCE has a number of tools with security, economic, and human dimension elements that could contribute to the overall effort of encouraging peace and reconciliation between Russia and Georgia in Abkhazia. This cable provides for Washington policy makers a menu of ideas for OSCE contributions to this effort. If Washington concurs with any of the suggestions below, USOSCE is prepared to begin to discuss these issues in greater detail with interested delegations in an effort to seek positive measures toward a settlement while maintaining firm political pressure on Russia to prevent further infringements on Georgia's sovereignty. End Summary.

OSCE as Mediator

[1](#)2. (C) The OSCE could assist U.S. efforts to help reduce tensions between Georgia and Russia in Abkhazia by setting up a political mechanism that serves as mediator to help decrease tensions and resolve the conflict. This could be either a number of countries grouped around a donor effort to fund the GoG's peace proposals, eminent persons selected by the Chairman in Office, or a high visibility personality working under OSCE auspices to facilitate peace talks. It could work alongside or instead of the Friends of the Secretary General. Russia may well oppose such ideas, but the Chairmanship has the authority to sponsor such a process and include key participating States (pS) with or without Russian concurrence.

Tools to Keep Pressure on Russia and Help Defuse Tensions

[1](#)3. (C) The OSCE forum is ideal for keeping the pressure on Russia to prevent further escalation. Permanent Council (PC) and Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) briefings have already been used to inform pS of facts on the ground regarding the August missile incident or the more recent downing of the Georgian UAV. We should continue to bring our concerns before such public forums, including by briefings from military experts who reviewed the Georgian UAV and radar data, or reports from UNOMIG on troop buildups. To the

extent that we can use unclassified sources or declassify other intelligence-derived products, we can help debunk Russian disinformation, and ratchet up the pressure on Russia by letting them know that the world is watching closely.

14. (SBU) In addition, OSCE procedures allow for several measures that could be used for transparency, confidence-building, and conflict prevention. These include:

-- Extraordinary Exchange of Information under procedures adopted by the FSC in 1993. Georgia, Abkhazia and Russia could agree to provide current information on forces and their locations in writing or in the form of briefings to the FSC. (Note: This cannot be compelled, but a Georgian offer would require Russia to refuse to reciprocate.)

-- Use the 1999 Vienna Document to Request:

a) Consultation and Cooperation Regarding Unusual Military Activities. Georgia can trigger this mechanism by a request for an explanation of such activities. Reply to the request is to be made within 48 hours. Both the request and the reply are sent over the OSCE network with copies to all pS. It can be followed up by a call for a meeting chaired by the Cio.

b) Voluntary Hosting of Visits: A State whose military activities concern one or more other pS may invite those pS and others to visit(s) in an effort to help dispel the concerns. Georgia could show its openness by offering to host a visit to the Kodori Valley or Patriot Camp to prove that they are not engaged in a destabilizing buildup of forces, and challenge Russia to do the same at its facilities in Abkhazia inside and outside the UNOMIG zone.

USOSCE 00000132 002.2 OF 003

c) Inspections and Evaluations: Unfortunately, the 2008 quota for inspections and evaluations for Georgian territory has already been exhausted.

d) Chapter X - Regional Measures: States may undertake additional "voluntary" measures above and beyond their normal commitments under the Vienna Document. Georgia could, for instance, arrange a non-quota multinational inspection, led by another pS, of its territory. Such an inspection could include portions of Abkhazia under Georgian control (e.g., Kodori Valley) and could highlight Georgia's (and if they agreed Russia's and Abkhazia's) willingness to be transparent.

-- (C) PC to authorize mission monitoring officers (MMOs) for Abkhazia, in a mandate expansion: The OSCE already has MMOs in South Ossetia. These would be organized along the same lines, concentrating foremost on territory not within UNOMIG's zone of operations.

-- (C) Encourage and support joint police training and community policing in the entire region, including a civilian police force in the Gali district as called for in the Ministerial Statement of 2005. OSCE experience in Kosovo with Community Policing is directly relevant.

-- (C) NATO Radar: Use the NATO Caucus at the OSCE to raise the sense of urgency to allow NATO activation of the ASDE radar, linking Georgia's defense radar to NATO in real time.

-- (C) Aerial Monitoring of the Zone of Conflict (or a greater area) by a third party, with results (either real-time or delayed) available to both parties. This previously has been proposed by UNOMIG, and would be a regional parallel to the basic premises of the Open Skies agreement overseen by FSC delegates at the OSCE.

Economic Tools

15. (C) The OSCE could also resort to economic levers, specifically by working to:

-- (C) Establish an Economic Reconstruction Program for Abkhazia modeled on the ERP in South Ossetia. The CiO could convene a donors conference before the next OSCE Ministerial, just as Belgium did for South Ossetia in 2006.

-- (C) Urge OSCE support for the Georgia plan for a free-trade zone for Abkhazia and support access to foreign markets for Abkhaz goods shipped through Tbilisi/Georgia proper (similar to the EUBAM effort on Moldova's borders).

Human Dimension Tools

17. (C) Focus greater attention on the plight of refugees from Abkhazia: One of the key OSCE mandates elsewhere (especially in the Balkans) is reporting on and facilitating return and resettlement of refugees. IDPs and refugees from Abkhazia are part of the UNOMIG mandate, so this would be a coordinated undertaking. This would require a change in mandate for the OSCE Mission in Georgia, with Russian acquiescence.

-- (C) Open the long-discussed joint UN/OSCE human rights office in Gali district, as called for in the Ministerial Statement of 2005.

Public Diplomacy Tools Through the OSCE

18. (C) CiO visit: A visit by Finnish FM and OSCE Chairman in Office (CiO) Stubb to the area could help mobilize European public opinion to the problems. Itinerary could include a high-visibility tour of one or more newsworthy sites (e.g., border control area, Georgian radar facility, UNOMIG checkpoint), with press and TV invited to accompany. Press conference at the end of visit to present impressions and findings. Follow-up visit(s) should also incorporate opportunities for press to accompany and report on group activity. The U.S. could support CiO efforts by bilateral PD efforts, including wider distribution in the public domain of U.S. Permanent Council and FSC statements, op eds in national

USOSCE 00000132 003.2 OF 003

and European media outlets by leading USG figures, publication of a State Department Fact Sheet with updated information about the history of the Abkhaz conflict and Georgia's relations with Russia, and even a tour for journalists -- patterned after NATO journalist tours -- of Georgia, including entry into Abkhazia, and briefings in Vienna by OSCE officials on conflict-resolution efforts and by U.S. and allies' experts on the existing technical evidence from recent tension-generating military incidents.
FINLEY